



Iowa Ag News – Honey Bee Colonies

Upper Midwest Regional Field Office · 210 Walnut Street Ste 833 · Des Moines IA 50309 · (515) 776-3400 · (800) 772-0825

fax (855) 271-9802 · www.nass.usda.gov

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Media Contact: Greg Thessen

Honey bee colonies for operations with 5 or more colonies in Iowa as of April 1, 2018, totaled 45,000 colonies. This is 275 percent above the 12,000 colonies on April 1 last year, and 10 percent above the 41,000 colonies last quarter. Producers boosted their April 1 inventory by moving colonies into Iowa and adding colonies to a maximum of 47,000 during the April-June 2018 quarter. In the last 6 quarters the April-June 2018 quarter had the largest maximum number of colonies, with 47,000, while January-March 2017 quarter had the smallest maximum number of colonies with 15,500.

Honey bee colonies lost for operations with 5 or more colonies for the April-June 2018 quarter was 4,300 or 9 percent. This was the second most colonies lost in the past 6 quarters and was 79 percent above the same period last year and 231 percent above losses reported last quarter. In the previous 6 quarters surveyed the largest percentage of the colonies lost, at 19 percent, occurred in the January-March 2017 quarter. The largest number of colonies lost was 6,500 colonies and occurred in the October-December 2017 quarter. The January-March 2018 quarter had the fewest number of colonies lost, at 1,300 colonies.

Varroa mites were the number one stressor for operations with 5 or more colonies during each of the 6 quarters surveyed. The April-June 2018 quarter showed varroa mites affected 12.7 percent of Iowa's honey bee colonies, which is the second lowest level in the past 6 quarters. Other Pests and Parasites, Pesticides, and Other Causes categories saw substantial increases this quarter.

Honey Bee Colonies – Iowa: 2017-2018

[Operations with 5 or more colonies.]

	First of the quarter number of colonies ¹	Maximum colonies ²	Lost colonies	Percent lost ³	Added colonies	Renovated colonies ⁴	Percent renovated ⁵
	(number)	(number)	(number)	(percent)	(number)	(number)	(percent)
Jan-Mar 2017	10,000	15,500	3,000	19	70	0	0
Apr-Jun 2017	12,000	23,000	2,400	10	23,000	3,900	17
Jul-Sep 2017	40,000	43,000	2,200	5	2,100	4,000	9
Oct-Dec 2017	45,000	45,000	6,500	14	250	3,400	8
Jan-Mar 2018	41,000	45,000	1,300	3	420	110	(Z)
Apr-Jun 2018	45,000	47,000	4,300	9	15,500	4,800	10

(Z) Less than half of the unit shown.

¹ Number of colonies in the state as of the first day of the quarter.

² Number of colonies in the state on the first day of the quarter plus all colonies moved into state during the quarter.

³ Percent lost is the number of lost colonies divided by the maximum colonies.

⁴ Defined as any surviving colony that was requeened or received new honey bees through nuc or package.

⁵ Percent renovated is the number of renovated colonies divided by the maximum colonies.

Colony Health – Iowa: 2017-2018

[Operations with 5 or more colonies, percent of colonies affected by stressor. A colony may be affected by multiple stressors during the quarter.]

	Varroa mites	Other pests and parasites ¹	Diseases ²	Pesticides	Other ³	Unknown
	(percent)	(percent)	(percent)	(percent)	(percent)	(percent)
Jan-Mar 2017	33.6	8.3	8.4	12.0	11.9	11.7
Apr-Jun 2017	39.3	27.6	7.5	26.6	8.1	0.9
Jul-Sep 2017	17.2	7.2	2.4	3.9	4.0	2.2
Oct-Dec 2017	61.0	25.5	12.3	32.6	17.9	5.5
Jan-Mar 2018	5.3	1.1	0.3	0.6	0.6	1.4
Apr-Jun 2018	12.7	9.3	0.9	7.9	8.4	0.3

¹ Tracheal mites, nosea, hive beetle, wax moths, etc.

² Includes American and European foulbrood, chalkbrood, stonebrood, paralysis (acute and chronic), kashmir, deformed wing, sabrood, IAPV, Lake Sinai II, etc.

³ Includes weather, starvation, insufficient forage, queen failure, hive damage/destroyed, etc.

UNITED STATES HONEY BEE COLONIES

Honey bee colonies for operations with five or more colonies in the United States on January 1, 2018 totaled 2.63 million colonies, down slightly from January 1, 2017. The number of colonies in the United States on April 1, 2018 was 2.69 million colonies. During 2017, honey bee colonies on January 1, April 1, July 1, and October 1 were 2.64 million, 2.69 million, 2.99 million, and 2.85 million colonies, respectively.

Honey bee colonies lost for operations with five or more colonies from January through March 2018, was 425 thousand colonies, or 16 percent. The number of colonies lost during the quarter of April through June 2018 was 270 thousand colonies, or 10 percent. During the quarter of October through December 2017, colonies lost totaled 425 thousand colonies, or 15 percent, the highest of any quarter in 2017. The quarter in 2017 with the lowest number of colonies lost was April through June, with 286 thousand colonies lost, or 11 percent.

Honey bee colonies added for operations with five or more colonies from January through March 2018 was 513 thousand colonies. The number of colonies added during the quarter of April through June 2018 was 726 thousand. During the quarter of April through June 2017, 613 thousand colonies were added, the highest number of honey bee colonies added for any quarter of 2017. The quarter of October through December 2017 added 205 thousand colonies, the least number of honey bee colonies added for any quarter of 2017.

Honey bee colonies renovated for operations with five or more colonies from January through March 2018 was 289 thousand colonies, or 11 percent. During the quarter of April through June 2018, 715 thousand colonies, or 27 percent, were renovated. The quarter in 2017 with the highest number of colonies renovated was April through June with 763 thousand colonies renovated, or 28 percent. The quarter in 2017 with the lowest number of colonies renovated was October through December 2017, with 214 thousand or 8 percent. Renovated colonies are those that were requeened or received new honey bees through a nuc or package.

Varroa mites were the number one stressor for operations with five or more colonies during all quarters of 2017. The quarter of October through December 2017 had the highest percentage of colonies reported to be affected by varroa mites at 55.3 percent. The percent of colonies reported to be affected by varroa mites during January through March 2018 and April through June 2018 are 40.8 percent and 53.4 percent, respectively.

Honey bee colonies lost with Colony Collapse Disorder symptoms on operations with five or more colonies was 77.8 thousand colonies from January through March 2018. This is a 15 percent increase from the same quarter of 2017. Colonies lost with Colony Collapse Disorder symptoms were reported to meet all of the following criteria: 1) Little to no build-up of dead bees in the hive or at the hive entrance 2) Rapid loss of adult honey bee population despite the presence of queen, capped brood, and food reserves 3) Absence or delayed robbing of the food reserves 4) Loss not attributable to varroa or nosema loads.

Honey bee colonies for operations with less than five colonies in the United States on January 1, 2017 totaled 40.0 thousand down 9 percent from January 1, 2016. During 2017, honey bee colonies on April 1, July 1, and October 1 were 35.0 thousand, 43.0 thousand, and 39.0 thousand, respectively.

Honey bee colonies lost for operations with less than five colonies during the quarter of January through March 2017 was 13.5 thousand colonies, the highest number of honey bee colonies lost during any quarter for 2017. The quarter in 2017 with the least number of colonies lost was April through June, with 4.20 thousand colonies.

Honey bee colonies added for operations with less than five colonies during the quarter of April through June 2017 was 12.5 thousand colonies, the highest number of honey bee colonies added during any quarter of 2017. The quarter in 2017 with the least number of colonies added was October through December, with 960 colonies.

Honey bee colonies renovated for operations with less than five colonies during the quarter of April through June 2017 was 4.40 thousand colonies, the highest number of honey bee colonies renovated during any quarter of 2017. The quarter in 2017 with the least number of colonies renovated was October through December, with 1.10 thousand colonies.

During 2017, the highest reported colony stressor was varroa mites, with 26.3 percent of the colonies reported to be affected. This is a 5 percent increase from the previous year.

Honey bee colonies lost with Colony Collapse Disorder symptoms on operations with less than five colonies was 6.00 thousand colonies during 2017, a 9 percent increase from 2016. Colonies lost with Colony Collapse Disorder symptoms were reported to meet all of the following criteria: 1) Little to no build-up of dead bees in the hive or at the hive entrance 2) Rapid loss of adult honey bee population despite the presence of queen, capped brood, and food reserves 3) Absence or delayed robbing of the food reserves 4) Loss not attributable to varroa or nosema loads.